

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Education Committee

BILL: SB 2688

INTRODUCER: Senator Haridopoulos

SUBJECT: School Districts/Paperwork Reduction

DATE: April 13, 2006

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Harkey	Matthews	ED	Favorable
2.			EA	
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

The bill would substantially implement the recommendations of the Paper Reduction Task Force. The bill:

- Requires district school boards to conduct a task force to reduce paperwork and data collection;
- Eliminates the Academic Improvement Plan and Personalized Middle School Success Plan; and
- Eliminates the state requirement for a School Improvement Plan for a school that earns a grade of “A” or “B” and creates more flexible options for a progress-monitoring plan.

This bill amends ss. 411.227, 1001.42, 1002.20, 1003.415, 1003.51, 1003.52, and 1008.25 Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

The 2005 Legislature created a Paper Reduction Task Force¹ to recommend ways to minimize the paperwork burden placed on school districts and school district personnel. The task force consisted of the Commissioner of Education, three members appointed by the President of the Senate, three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, three individuals appointed by the Governor, and three teachers appointed by the Commissioner of Education. The Paper Reduction Task Force met three times, solicited input from other educators, and collaborated to develop recommendations in the following six areas:

¹ Chapter 2005-31, L.O.F.

- Academic Improvement Plans and Individualized Student Plans;
- School Improvement Plans;
- Sunshine Connections;
- District Actions;
- Future Legislation; and
- Continuation of Statewide Paper Reduction Efforts.²

Academic Improvement Plans

The task force reviewed Academic Improvement Plans (AIPs) that are required under s. 1008.25(4), F.S., for each student who participates in the statewide assessment and does not meet the school board's specific levels of performance in reading, writing, science, and mathematics and found the plans to be "...a well-intended strategy which had unintended consequences."³ The task force found that, as implemented, the AIP has become an underutilized document that is perceived as "busy work" by teachers. The task force pointed out other individualized student plans that are designed to meet the needs of certain students, such as the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan and noted that these plans sometimes duplicate the AIP.

School Improvement Plans

The task force found that school improvement plans, required under s. 1001.42, F.S., were established as a tool to help schools create goals and identify needs as the school worked to increase student achievement. The task force said that "while these plans are very useful when properly created, schools that are meeting or exceeding expectations should not be required by the state to submit a plan, unless the plan is required by federal law"

Sunshine Connections

Sunshine Connections is a web-based platform currently being piloted in 14 school districts. It is developed for teachers, by teachers, with the goal of providing educators with an online avenue to share lesson plans and best practices, as well as providing instant access to longitudinal student performance data. The DOE anticipates that this tool will be accessible to teachers statewide by August 2006.⁴

Recommendations of the Paper Reduction Task Force

In a February 2006 report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the task force made the following recommendations to reduce the paperwork burden:

² Florida Department of Education. "Report on the Recommendations of the Paper Reduction Task Force." February 2006. p. 3.

³ *Ibid.* p. 11

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 13.

- Repeal the Academic Improvement Plan and consolidate other individualized student plans to provide school districts with flexibility. Allow districts to determine whether a struggling student will have (1) an individual progress monitoring plan or (2) be part of a school-wide progress monitoring system. An additional individualized student plan is not required if the student already has a federally required plan, such as the IEP or LEP Plan.
- Schools with a grade above a “C” shall not be required to complete a school improvement plan, unless required to do so by federal law. District school boards may still determine that these schools will still submit a School Improvement Plan.
- Amend s. 1001.42, F.S., so that the School Improvement Plan focuses strictly on student achievement and address plan requirements not relating to student achievement in other appropriate sections of the K-20 education code.
- Sunshine Connections should continue to be developed and implemented with a core goal of reducing paperwork and the burden of electronic data input for teachers. The Sunshine Connections Statewide Advisory Committee should review the findings of this task force and work to develop strategies within the functionality of each release to alleviate the paper and electronic burden hours placed on teachers. Furthermore, this task force endorses the development of an electronic, pre-populated statewide IEP as a part of Sunshine Connections.
- School boards are not to exceed paperwork and reporting requirements mandated by the state without extensive public hearings, input from local paper reduction task forces, and detailed analysis of “burden hours”—the amount of time required to gather, compile, complete, transmit and report information (hard copy and electronic) for the proposed mandate.
- Each district school board should be required to create a task force, comprised predominantly of teachers, to reduce the paper and electronic reporting requirements in their district and to report their actions to the Department of Education.
- The official analysis of legislation by either legislative chamber shall include an estimation of the “burden hours” created by the proposed legislation.
- The Department of Education will annually review the progress of school and district implementation of recommendations, and will review the results of the district task forces.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill would substantially implement the recommendations of the Paper Reduction Task Force. The bill amends section 1001.42, F.S., to:

- Require that only schools that earn a grade of “C” or below would have to complete a school improvement plan, unless they are otherwise required to have a plan by federal law;
- Permit the school district to require these schools to complete a school improvement plan if desired;
- Remove the non-academic requirements from the school improvement plan.; Require school districts to hold extensive public hearings and provide detailed analysis of the burden hours needed to complete paperwork, hard copies, and electronic copies required under a state mandate if the district will exceed the state requirements; and
- Require the district to establish a task force to reduce the paper and electronic reporting requirements that impact the school district, which may include the duties specified in s. 1008.385(2)(b), F.S., and prescribes activities related to the task force as follows—

- A majority of the task force members must be classroom teachers with additional members including, but not limited to, one exceptional student education teacher, school administrators, district-level personnel, and the district school superintendent.
- The task force must seek to reduce the burden hours required of school district staff by making recommendations to the district school board on ways to reduce, eliminate, revise, or consolidate requirements relating to, but not limited to, student attendance, student behavior, and teacher lesson plans.
- The task force must annually report its actions and recommendations to the Department of Education.
- The department shall review the annual reports and progress of each school district task force and, based on such information, provide its recommendations to school districts for reduction, elimination, revision, or consolidation of paper and electronic reporting requirements.

The bill amends s. 1003.415, F.S., to delete the requirement for a Personalized Middle School Success Plan.

The bill amends s. 1008.25, F.S., to:

- Create the requirement for a progress monitoring plan to provide the school district and the school flexibility in meeting the academic needs of the student and to reduce paperwork.
- Require that a student who is not meeting the school district or state requirements for proficiency must be covered by one of the following plans to target instruction and identify ways to improve his or her academic achievement:
 - A federally-required student plan such as an individual education plan;
 - A school-wide system of progress monitoring for all students; or
 - An individualized progress monitoring plan.
- Delete the requirement for an Academic Improvement Plan.

The bill makes other conforming changes to ss. 411.227, 1002.20, and 1003.52, F.S., to address the deletion of the Academic Improvement Plan.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

School districts would incur the cost of establishing the district task force required by the bill. It is possible that the cost of the task force will be offset by the savings realized from increased efficiency and reduced paperwork.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
